The SPS Connection

November/December 2005

The Communications Loop

Colonel's Corner

To keep the productive relationship between SPS users and the JPMO strong, I want to emphasize the importance of communications.

more

Service Talk

This is the place to hear directly from the SPS Desk Officers — from conference announcements and breaking news to kudos and status updates. Service Talk is where you'll find service-specific news.

more

Tips and Tricks: Back to Basics

This article reviews which settings in the "Clauses Task" are used to identify provisions, so the system knows to automatically remove them from the "clauses" tab on an award.

more

Ask the Editor

We've opened a section in the newsletter for you, the readers ...

more

SPS Aids Hurricane Relief Efforts Along the Gulf Coast

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, SPS faced a real test of its capabilities. The contracting squadron from Keesler Air Force Base, the Louisiana Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District recently shared their stories with *The SPS Connection*.

more

SPS Training Transformation

SPS will make video-based training for version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) and Web-based training for v4.2.3 accessible to all users via the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Web site.

more

Much Ado About 2005

This year, the JPMO has made strides deploying version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) and developing v4.2.3. All the while, they've sustained v4.2.1 for the sites still on that baseline.

more

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Events

12/12/2005
Army SPS Training Conference - Orlando, Fla.

<< prev   next >>

The SPS Socket

Below is just one of many questions on the SPS Users Satisfaction Survey which seeks your feedback on multiple aspects of the SPS Program. Complete the survey today by going to the SPS COE. Are you an SPS user today?

○ Version 4.1.e
○ Version 4.2.1
○ Version 4.2.2
○ No

Submit   Results

News from Washington Affecting the SPS Community

more

Click here to send your SPS-related comments, questions or issues to the SPS Desk Officers.

The SPS Connection welcomes all articles, photos and letters from SPS users and the community at large. Please send your input to *The SPS Connection* editor.

Colonel's Corner: Continuing the Communications Loop

First, I want to reiterate my enthusiasm about joining the Standard Procurement System (SPS). It is very encouraging to lead a Program that is so focused on its users and that places such high value on user feedback.

To keep the productive relationship between SPS users and the Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) strong, I want to emphasize the importance of two-way communications. As we go about our day-to-day work, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture, which includes the approaching transition to version 4.2 increment 3 (v4.2.3). In an evolving program, such as SPS, maintaining open lines of communication between the users and the program office is critical. The JPMO provides multiple ways to continue and enhance our dialogue:

- Subscribe and read
  The SPS Connection
- Register and login to the SPS Center of Excellence (COE) Web site
- Contact your SPS Desk Officer and Joint Requirements Board (JRB) representatives
- Volunteer to test upcoming builds of the SPS software

The SPS Connection

The SPS Connection has been an important communications channel for the SPS user

---

Congrats to SPS: *CIO* Enterprise Value Award Winner, Government Category

CIO magazine selected SPS as the winner of its annual Enterprise Value Award in the government category. COL Peach accepted the award on the Program's behalf at a ceremony held Nov. 6 in Phoenix, Ariz. To learn more, read the press release.

---

community since 2002 and currently reaches more than 7,000 SPS users per issue. As we move forward with v4.2.3 upgrades and training, the newsletter will play a key role in providing information and facts to you about these topics. For this reason, it is important that all users know about and read *The SPS Connection*.

The newsletter is published online every other month. Each issue includes:

- The "Colonel's Corner" column, where I talk directly to the user community
- The "Service Talk" column, in which the Desk Officers keep you up-to-date on the latest news concerning the specific components and share lessons and advice across the Services
  and Agencies

Continuing the Communications Loop [continued]

- The "Tips and Tricks" section, with advice to make using SPS easier for you
- The "SPS Socket," an informal way for the JPMO to receive feedback from you

Furthermore, each issue contains two or three feature articles on current topics. For instance, in this issue, the feature articles are about v4.2.3's Web-based training and SPS' support of hurricane relief efforts. Other sections of the newsletter that are beneficial to you include:

- "DC Current," providing news from Washington, D.C., relevant to the SPS community
- The events calendar, which links to worldwide events and conferences related to procurement and acquisition

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the "Ask the Editor" column, where you can ask questions about the Program, the SPS software, training, upgrades and all things SPS. Unlike many online feedback forums, you can expect to receive an answer to your question.
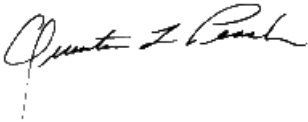
Subscription information is found on the newsletter's front page. I also encourage you to pass the newsletter along to your team members, so they, too, can subscribe. The more users subscribed to the newsletter, the more powerful a tool the newsletter becomes for bringing together the entire SPS community.

The SPS Center of Excellence

The SPS COE is a Web-portal system available to the entire SPS community.

My sincere thanks to all who participated in the recent version 4.2 increment 3, build 4, testing. I am looking forward to the same support and success for the testing of build 5 early next year.

Congratulations to all users who closed out the fiscal year with SPS v4.2.1 or v4.2.2. It was a great success.

The COE provides a collaborative structure, through which members can share documents, ideas and information. The COE is also an excellent resource for information and announcements pertaining to the components, training, upgrades, workshops and many other items.

The COE has separate pages with information from each of the components, as well as restricted pages for specific workgroups and teams. The portal includes functions, such asshared lists, document libraries, surveys, discussion boards and
e-mail notifications to help you and your team perform more efficiently.

The COE is a unique and powerful tool to help you keep in touch not only with the Program but with other SPS users as well.

Continuing the Communications Loop [continued]

Finally, I encourage you to contact your component's <u>Desk Officer</u> and <u>JRB</u> representatives. Not only can they keep you abreast of the SPS Program, but they also want to hear to your concerns and suggestions. You may also volunteer through your <u>Desk Officer</u> to test new versions of SPS.

Looking ahead to the future of SPS and the transition to v4.2.3, communication throughout the community is vital. The JPMO is committed to providing you, the users, sound, current and timely information. I ask you to continue using the communications loop by being attentive, responsive and contributing to the channels we provide.

— Quentin Peach, COL, USA,
Standard Procurement System Program Manager

The SPS Connection
November/December 2005

Service Talk

From the SPS Desk Officers to You!

This is the place to hear directly from the SPS Desk Officers! These are the folks responsible for SPS' success in your component.

From conference announcements and breaking news to kudos and status updates, Service Talk is where you'll find important news from the Desk Officers.

Army | Navy/USMC | Air Force
DCMA | DLA | ODA

The SPS Connection welcomes all articles, photos and letters from SPS users and the community at large. Please send your input to *The SPS Connection* Editor.

Service Talk: Army

Out of Site

When should the external award functionality be used? How is an award entered as an external award? What about contracts reassigned to another issuing office?

These are questions that come up often. Hopefully, the following information will help answer them.

The external award functionality was developed for sites and offices, not including the issuing office, *only* for the purpose of issuing delivery orders against a contract. Modifications cannot be created against an external award document. If administrative contracting officer (ACO) responsibility has been granted to issue modifications against a contract, it should not be entered as an external award.

When the contract has already been released by the issuing site and distributed/reported to the appropriate parties, external awards are not generated, nor are they released. When these awards are issued by another contracting office, delivery orders issued using external award functionality should reflect the two-digit call designator number. Otherwise, multiple sites authorized to use this contract would duplicate the delivery order numbers beginning with 0001.

U.S. Army Spc. Wendell Guillermo peers out from his sand bagged position as he provides security in Tal Afar, Iraq. Image courtesy of Defense Link.

Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement (DFARS) case 204.7004, paragraphs D-1 and D-2 set forth numbering guidance for orders and calls placed by the contract or agreement's issuing office and for orders and calls placed by an office that is different from the contract's or agreement's issuing office. In addition, paragraph E addresses the numbering of modifications to these orders or calls if issued by the purchasing office or the administration office.

Instructions for assignment of order codes can be found in DFARS case 204.7005. (Order codes used to be listed in Appendix G of the DFARS, but Appendix G no longer

exists.) Any requests for the assignment of changes to these two-digit order codes for Army sites should be submitted to the Army Contracting Agency.

Submit requests for the assignment of or changes to order codes to:
Army Contracting Agency
Attn: SFCA-IT
5109 Leesburg Pike, Suite 302
Falls Church , VA 22041-3201

If a contract has been reassigned to another issuing office or full ACO responsibility has been given to another issuing office (other than the one identified in the procurement item identification number), the contract should be entered as a regular contract. It would have to be generated, approved and released by a contracting officer but is not processed through Electronic Document Access or distributed/reported again.

Unlike external awards, where you only create a shell with limited information, these contracts must be built in the system just as they are, including any previously issued modification information. When additional modifications are created, the modification number should be changed to reflect the next sequential mod, otherwise a modification P00001 will be assigned.

Contributed by the Army Response Team

— <u>Mr. George Chavis</u>, Army SPS Desk Officer

Service Talk: Navy and Marine Corps
"New" CMO Team Personnel

As many of you may have heard, I resigned from IBM Business Consulting Services on Sept. 30 and accepted a position as a Project Director in the Program Executive Office for Information Technology (PEO IT). In my new role, I am responsible for Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (DASN) Acquisition Programs and other duties. I plan to continue to serve as your Navy/Marine Corps Standard Procurement System (SPS) Desk Officer and hope to shuttle between desks at PEO IT and the Joint Program Management Office (JPMO).

My new e-mail address is eric.ferraro@navy.mil, and my PEO IT phone number is (703) 602-6716 (voicemail not yet working at this number). I can also be reached on my cell phone, (703) 801-6025, if you need to track me down.

Also, Mr. Harry Velasquez has joined the Component Management Office (CMO) team as the technical lead and testing point of contact. Velasquez is usually at the Pentagon in the DASN Acquisition office where you can reach him at (703) 614-9604 or via e-mail.

SPS Claimant Council Held Oct. 20

Fifty people attended the SPS Claimant Council meeting in Fairfax, Va., where

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Jones cleans the inside of a propeller from an E-2C Hawkeye aircraft. Image courtesy of Defense Link.

CAPT Mark Stiles, Mr. Harry Velasquez, SPS Technical Lead, and I presented the headquarters view of SPS' status in the Navy and the road and tasks ahead.
Ms. Erica Hartman, Program Manager for End-to-End Procurement Automation for the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), presented an update on NAVSUP's database consolidation effort.
Mr. Gino Magnifico, SPS Deputy Program Manager, and Ms. Amy Taylor, SPS Technical Director, also contributed. Representatives from the Defense Information Systems Agency briefed attendees on the upcoming (April 30) merger of the Navy Air Force Interface into Electronic Document Access.

Service Talk: Navy and Marine Corps [continued]

Many thanks to all the claimant representatives and industry partners who attended. Also, thanks to the Navy Response Team for their support. The attendee roster, presentations, minutes and action items are available on the Navy page of the SPS Center of Excellence portal.

Version 4.2 Increment 2 SR06 Now Available

The JPMO accepted Service Release 06 (SR06) in late October, and the SPS Help Desk sent out an Info-Mail on Oct. 25 announcing its availability for download. We are still working on the strategy to get this release on the computer desktops with the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI). For the time being, SR06 is available to sites that are not on NMCI or use Citrix to run SPS.

V4.2.3, Build 4, Testing: Thank You Again!

Navy and Marine Corps testers completed version 4.2 increment 3 (v4.2.3), build 4, testing late this summer at the JPMO Government Test Facility in Fairfax, Va., and at the Military Sealift Command (MSC) headquarters in Washington, DC. Many thanks to MSC for the use of their facility and to the claimants and testers for stepping up during a busy time of year to participate in the first round of testing. This was our first exposure to v4.2.3, and the feedback you provided to the JPMO and Navy leadership was heard loud and clear.

If you have any questions about v4.2.3 functionality, please contact the Navy's SPS Joint Requirements Board Representatives Ms. Sherry Hedding and/or Mr. Alan Karty.

Hedding may be contacted at (860) 433-6617, and Karty may be reached at (760) 939-3640.

JPMO SPS Classes: Army Knowledge Online (AKO)

The JPMO no longer sponsors SPS classes in Fairfax, Va. However, claimants/sites can still schedule and fund SPS classes using the contract line item numbers (CLIN) in the SPS contract with CACI. Please contact me if you have any questions or need to coordinate with the JPMO.

In an effort to continue to provide v4.2.2 training and to prepare for v4.2.3 training, the JPMO has established an SPS Learning Management System using the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Web site. The JPMO also video-taped v4.2.2 classes to post on the AKO Web site and will also post a certification test for each class, so students may obtain credit for completing the classes. The videos can also be viewed on DVDs, which will be available for distribution soon.

Keep an eye out for more direction on registering for the AKO and obtaining the DVDs when they are available later this fall.

SPS Metrics Reminder

Each month, sites using SPS in production are required to post their monthly SPS metrics (operational users, number of awards and dollars obligated) to the DASN Acquisition Metrics Web site. The Navy Response Team (NRT) has developed a standard Structured Query Language (SQL) script that will gather this information.

Service Talk: Navy and Marine Corps [continued]

Please contact the NRT if you need the SQL script.

Army SPS Conference in December

The Army will hold an SPS conference Dec. 12-16 in Orlando, Fla. The conference is geared primarily to Army users and will focus on the Army's upgrades from v4.2.1 to v4.2.2. The Army Desk Officer has requested our participation to provide "lessons learned" and first-hand recaps of the Navy and Marine Corps' experiences upgrading to SPS v4.2.2. I sent an e-mail on Oct. 26 seeking volunteers to speak, so please let me know if anyone would like to participate in the breakout sessions.

PD² BLOB Compression Utility

What is it? The Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD²) Binary Large Object (BLOB) compression utility was released with v4.2.2 SR05. This utility is used to compress PD² tables, which can consume large amounts of space, to store BLOB data such as signature bitmaps. By compressing these tables, the tool frees up space in your PD² database.

Currently, there is a known defect with the utility causing CLIN template data to become corrupt. A standard script to back-up and restore all local and standard CLIN templates is available via the SPS Help Desk and will be available in the next release of Script-Aid. This script must be run before and after executing the utility. Please see Knowledge Base article 45744 for more information.

— Mr. Eric Ferraro , Navy/Marine Corps SPS Desk Officer

Page 3

Service Talk: Air Force

Air Force: Tips and Tricks

Air Force Contracting Information Systems (AFCIS) and the Air Force Customer Service Team (AFCST) document Standard Procurement System (SPS) issues that Air Force contracting sites report. Common issues reported by the Air Force and their resolutions are outlined below.

Delivery Order Creation

Please take caution when creating delivery orders within Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD²). The buyer will need to ensure that he or she selects the correct option in the "create new delivery order" window when creating delivery orders. "Delivery/task order" is the Department of Defense (DoD) option, and the "General Services Administration schedule order" applies to any non-DoD orders. Non-DoD orders follow a different rule set than a DoD delivery order, and PD² treats each as a separate form. (For example, "block tow" will populate differently between the two options.)

If you encounter this issue of creating the incorrect delivery-order form, the standard resolution is to "no-cost cancel" and then re-create the document with the correct option selected.

Airman 1st Class Jacques Young inspects the turkey feathers on a Pratt and Whitney F100-220E engine. Image courtesy of Defense Link.

How to Un-Associate a PR from a Released Document

The functional solution is to renumber the purchase request (PR) to a "placeholder" number, copy the PR and then renumber the newly created copy to the original PR number. This new PR can then be correctly attached to the appropriate document.

How to Expedite Your Service Request for a Script Modification to a Released Document

Service requests that involve modification to a released document via script (or Script-Aid) will require approval from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Contracting Business Systems Division (SAF/AQCI).

Service Talk: Air Force [continued]

An easy way to expedite this process is to proactively provide the information to the CACI SPS Help Desk. SAF will need to approve this request. Make sure to clearly state the problem to the CACI SPS Help Desk, including the below information:

- Document number (for renumbering issues, provide current and planned document numbers)
- The status of Electronic Document Access/Navy Air Force Interface (NAFI). (Has the document been posted to NAFI? If so, please inactivate the document.)
- The status of the Integrated Accounts Payable System/Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). (Has the document been paid by DFAS?)
- A detailed description of the situation (including why this cannot be resolved by a functional workaround or without a script)

With this information, AFCST can directly forward your request to SAF/AQ for approval and, subsequently, the AFCST can move forward to resolve the issue.

AFCIS V4.2.2 SA Confidence Course

The AFCIS Confidence Course is designed to effectively prepare Air Force site system administrators (SA) for their version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) upgrades. This self upgrade will present new challenges to SAs. It is important that SAs are introduced to the new technology and challenges inherent in v4.2.2 prior to the scheduled upgrade. This course prepares SAs to meet these challenges.

The course is conducted at AFCIS Gunter, Ala., and scheduled one month prior to each site's scheduled upgrade. To determine when your site will attend, please see the "Instrument Panel" on the AFCIS Web site.

AFCIS plans to show the SPS Joint Program Management Office's (JPMO) video-based training during the Confidence Course (if it is available), so SAs can receive "authorized caller" status for the Help Desk. (Note: The video-based training is not required if the SA has already attended the Adapter instructor-led training through the SPS JPMO.)

The course will accommodate one SA per site in order to allow each student their own computer station. This should make the course more comfortable and provide an effective learning environment. The next Confidence Course is currently scheduled for Dec. 12. Start dates for subsequent classes will be announced in December.

— Ms. Susan Haskew, Air Force SPS Desk Officer

Tips and Tricks
Back to Basics: Designating Provisions vs. Clauses

Sometimes users are surprised when a Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation (DFAR) or local clause does not transfer from a solicitation into an associated award document. What users may not realize is that these clauses are actually designated within the system as solicitation provisions and, as such, are not applicable to the resulting award document.

This article reviews which settings in the "Clauses Task" are used to identify provisions, so the system knows to automatically remove them from the "clauses" tab on an award. Understanding these settings can be useful to sites that wish to set up local clauses as provisions but do not want them carried over into an award.

'Placeholders' = Clause Tab Items

Discussions about clauses and provisions can easily become confusing because of the terminology used in Procurement
Desktop-Defense (PD²) to describe clauses, provisions and other information that is generated into the continuation sheet of a document. PD² refers to virtually all items in the "clauses" tab of a procurement document as a clause. "Placeholder" is a term that is often used interchangeably with clause to

reference rows that display in the "clauses" tab of a PD² document. To simplify and standardize these terms, the Standard Procurement System (SPS) Help Desk has adopted the term "placeholders" to describe all items listed in the "clauses" tab of the document. All placeholders added to the "clauses" tab using the "add text" button are referred to as add-text placeholders, while all placeholders added to the "clauses" tab using the "add clause" button, or autoclause selection, are referred to as clauses.

FAR, DFAR and local clauses can be included in all documents in all phases of the procurement process.
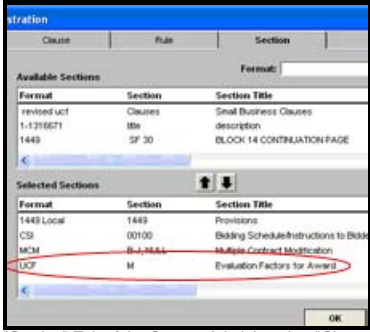
Provisions vs. Clauses

Each FAR, DFAR and local clause added to the "clauses" tab using the "add clause" selection is categorized by the system as either a contract clause or a solicitation provision. PD² distinguishes clauses from provisions based on what is selected for that clause in the "section" tab of the "Clauses Task" of System Administration.

If Uniform Contract Format (UCF)-section K, UCF-section L or UCF-section M is listed in the "selected sections" window of the "section" tab for a clause, PD² recognizes the clause as a provision. When this

Back to Basics: Designating Provisions vs. Clauses [continued]

provision is added to the "clauses" tab of the solicitation, it will not pull forward to the award document regardless of what format is selected on the solicitation.

To illustrate, look at the screenshot below. The screen shows the "section" tab of FAR clause 52.212-2 in the System Administration "Clauses Task." FAR clause 52.212-2 is a provision used in commercial solicitations, and the Standard Form (SF) 1449 (non-UCF format) is generally used for commercial solicitations. Note, however, that UCF-section M is selected in the "section" tab. This allows the system to identify FAR clause 52.212-2 as a provision rather than a clause. As a result, when the provision is added to a 1449 commercial solicitation, it will not pull forward to the award.

"Section" Tab of the System Administration "Clauses Task" for FAR Clause 52.212-2 (Click to enlarge)

If the System Administrator chooses to remove UCF-section M from the "selected sections" window, the system would incorporate the provision into the award. It is important, therefore, that a system administrator always selects UCF-section K, L or M when setting up local provisions in the "Clauses Task."

Summary

Since the UCF-sections identified in the "selected sections" window of the "Clauses Task" distinguish clauses from provisions, check this window when a clause inadvertently disappears from an award but is present in the solicitation. UCF-section K, L or M is more than likely included in the "selected sections" window of the "Clauses Task." Conversely, perform the same check any time a clause meant to be a provision unexpectedly appears in an award. In this case, the problem may be that UCF-section K, L or M was not selected when it should have been.

Hopefully, this review will help you troubleshoot situations where the "clauses" tab of an award built from a solicitation contains some unexpected results. ●

— Mr. Bob Parillo, SPS User Satisfaction Manager

Ask the Editor

I am a new Government Servant (GS)-1102-09, working for the Marine Corps Logistics Command Albany, Ga., but am located at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, Calif. I was a GS-1102-09, 11 and 12, from 1988 through 1995. Things have changed a lot, and I am looking for online training on the Standard Procurement System (SPS) Program. Can I register for the <u>Center of Excellence</u> (COE) and find training there?

— Mr. Robert Fournier, Marine Corps Logistics Command

Instructional videos on SPS version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) and Web-based training for SPS v4.2.3 will be available on the <u>Army Knowledge Online</u> (AKO) Web site via the Learning Management System (LMS). Directions for acquiring an <u>AKO</u> login and accessing LMS are available in the training section of the <u>COE</u> . To keep abreast of the latest online training offerings, I recommend staying tuned to the training page on the <u>COE</u> and reading the <u>article</u> on training in this issue of *The SPS Connection*.

— Ms. Leesa Edson, SPS Training Manager

Have a burning question about SPS? We want to hear from you. *The SPS Connection*'s goal is to deliver useful, timely information about SPS to users on a regular basis. However, we're aware there are a lot of questions out there we're not addressing. So, we've opened a section in the newsletter for you, the readers, to <u>send in</u> your questions about the Program. A member of the team at Joint Program Management Office will respond.

SPS Aids Hurricane Relief Efforts Along the Gulf Coast

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Standard Procurement System (SPS) faced a real test of its capabilities. Many contracting offices, along with the surrounding communities, were flooded and destroyed. Yet, Department of Defense contracting professionals on the Gulf Coast persevered to purchase millions of dollars worth of relief aid using SPS. Contracting officers from Keesler Air Force Base, the Louisiana Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District recently shared their stories with
The SPS Connection.

Continuity of Operations Plan Keeps the Air Force Flying

Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., an Air Education and Training Command (AETC) asset, was severely damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Six feet of standing water on the main part of the base and electrical fires in many buildings caused most of the damage. The contracting squadron's building, located on the base's bay side, was hit by storm surge and flooding, and the building's roof was torn off from the ferocity of the wind. Every piece of contracting equipment was destroyed, including the infrastructure like wires, cables and switches. Nothing was salvaged.

Storm surge floods the commissary parking lot at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., during Hurricane Katrina. Keesler's contracting office is located only a quarter of a mile from the commissary.

Because of a well devised and efficiently implemented Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), contracting officers at Keesler were able to run limited SPS operations in a temporary facility only a week after the hurricane. This allowed for critical purchases like damage assessment teams, debris removal, roofing cover and replacement, vehicle replacement and general repairs to be made immediately.

"SPS was instrumental in hurricane cleanup around the base. It allowed us to connect to other vital financial systems to complete our transactions, which ensured the emergency requirements were received and obligation status was reported in a timely manner.

SPS Aids Hurricane Relief Efforts Along the Gulf Coast [continued]

SPS certainly proved its capability to operate and aid in a strenuous recovery effort," said Mr. Kurt Stillman, Chief of E-Business at AETC.

Stillman emphasized that none of this would have been possible without the COOP set in place only months before the disaster. In May, the Air Force's Contracting Functional Requirements Board (FRB) implemented a standard emergency plan in the case of catastrophic disaster. This plan includes emergency delivery of a pre-positioned contingency server farm and on-site technical support to help stand-up contracting operations in the disaster area.

When the Air Force determined that all contracting equipment at Keesler was destroyed, the ATEC Director of Contracting ordered the activation of the Air Force emergency plan, which got the contracting officers started on the recovery process. A team from the Air Force Contracting Information Systems Directorate, Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala., came to their assistance with a mobile training kit, complete with the laptops and the database and application servers needed to complete the temporary setup.

Additionally, Keesler had a current and complete inventory of all contracting equipment that made purchasing new contracting equipment efficient.

Since the hurricane hit just in time for fiscal year-end close outs, all of Keesler's year-end work was transferred to Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Fla. The transfer allowed the contracting professionals at Keesler to dedicate their time and attention to the cleanup efforts.

The contracting officers at Keesler are still working out of a temporary location, supporting base cleanup and reconstruction. They expect to be in the temporary facility for at least three months as their permanent building is refurbished.

Louisiana Army National Guard Provides State-Wide Relief

Hurricane Katrina devastated Jackson Barracks, a Louisiana Army National Guard asset in New Orleans, La. Jackson Barracks, which is close to the lower ninth ward, was affected by a nearby levee break. The contracting building itself had nearly ten feet of water in it, and the brick wall surrounding the base was destroyed by flooding. In addition, the mold and mildew ruined anything the flooding didn't. It is expected to be three to five years before Jackson Barracks is populated again.

CW3 Tracy Montalbano and Mr. Mark Blanco, both contracting specialists for the Louisiana Army National Guard, were relocated from Jackson Barracks after the hurricane. But, despite this setback, they were involved in the state-wide hurricane relief efforts using SPS to purchase supplies, such as bulldozers, helicopters, forklifts, meals and even footlockers for troops deployed to New Orleans. SPS was instrumental in getting these critical supplies quickly to those who needed them.

When first establishing the relocated office, initial purchases were made with government purchase cards. However, Blanco said, "SPS was wonderful once we got electricity, manpower and computers. The flexibility of the software and hardware enabled us to use it anywhere."

SPS Aids Hurricane Relief Efforts Along the Gulf Coast [continued]

Flooding and mildew caused severe damage to the comptroller's office in the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office at Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, La.

All of the site's files were backed-up at the Server Readiness Center in Northern Virginia. "The backups made it very easy to restore data and move out with the recovery mission," said Montalbano.

Both Montalbano and Blanco agree that supporting the hurricane relief effort is a rewarding experience. They expect to continue supporting the relief efforts into the beginning of next year.

"This is what the Guard does," said Blanco. "It helps states during natural disasters. The Louisiana Guard and Guard units from all 50 states were here helping before, during and after the hurricane."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rebuilds Leaking Levees

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New Orleans District played a key role in the hurricane relief efforts in New Orleans, La. From a remote location in Vicksburg, Miss., the USACE New Orleans District contracting specialists provided critical support to close

levee breaches and control flooding. The district's COOP enabled this support.

The USACE New Orleans District's contracting office implemented their COOP when news of the impending hurricane was confirmed. A core group of professionals from all functional areas in the New Orleans District traveled to the USACE Vicksburg District, where the New Orleans District's SPS database is housed on a terminal server. This allowed the evacuated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff in Vicksburg to immediately access their SPS data to conduct critical contract actions in support of the hurricane relief effort. Also, just before evacuating, the New Orleans District gave the Memphis District access to their database, so Memphis could take over the New Orleans mission if the New Orleans District was unable to operate.

"When the storm hit, it was evident that our worst fears had been realized. As a result, the Vicksburg EOC became a focal point of contractual activity to close the levee breaches and control flooding," said Ms. Dianne Allen, Chief of the USACE Policy Branch for the New Orleans District and EOC staff member.

Using SPS, contracts awarded for the relief effort included equipment and rock to fill flooding breaches, closure and breach repair, delivery and filling of sandbags, fuel barges, pumps, aqua barriers, aerial reconnaissance, generators, subsistence for New Orleans District flood fighters and life support for the New Orleans District.

SPS Aids Hurricane Relief Efforts Along the Gulf Coast [continued]

Mr. J.P. Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, confers with Ms. Paulette Phillips and Ms. Cindy Nicholas, Contracting, New Orleans District, while working at the EOC in Vicksburg, Miss.

"SPS allowed us access to all of our contracting tools. We were able to get vital information about organizations and vendors from our SPS database so that we could contact them for our emergency operations. Not having an automated system in these circumstances would have made immediate support impossible," Allen said.

Efforts to cleanup and re-establish the USACE New Orleans District and the surrounding area continue and are expected to take months or even years to complete. The USACE Memphis, Tenn., District is also instrumental in supporting Federal Emergency Management Agency relief efforts and is conducting most contracting actions by accessing the New Orleans District's SPS database from the Baton Rouge, La., Recovery Field Office.

"I don't know any other procurement system that would allow this flexibility," said Allen. ●

SPS Training Transformation

Over the past decade, e-learning has grown into a $7 billion industry and is still expanding. Private companies, higher-education institutions, grade schools and government-sanctioned organizations are using Web-based education systems to deliver direct instruction to more people, while saving resources and travel expenses. The Standard Procurement System (SPS) has developed its own e-learning system for the same reasons.

SPS will make video-based training for version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) and Web-based training for v4.2.3 accessible to all users via the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Web site.

The JPMO's decision to transition from instructor-led training to e-learning is based on three factors:

- E-learning allows all 23,000+ users to receive individual, primary training
- E-learning significantly decreases training costs for both user sites and the JPMO
- E-learning enables users to refer back to the material at any time

Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) Training Manager Leesa Edson, who has studied and specializes in e-learning, is a strong proponent of the e-learning system in development for the remainder of v4.2.2 deployments and v4.2.3.

"Because we have users in 800 locations around the globe, Web-based training is an ideal way to manage new learning requirements," said Edson. "Web-based training is self-paced, available anytime users need to access it and, most importantly, every SPS user can experience the training first-hand."

Edson added that newly deployed users can jump between the application and the training modules as a refresher on how to apply new skills.

V4.2.2 and v4.2.3 training will be hosted on the Army's Learning Management System (LMS), which is a part of AKO. The Army's Distributed Learning System (DLS) manages and operates LMS — an Army project that provides educational services free of charge to the entire Department of Defense (DoD). This means all SPS users can access the system and the training, regardless of their component.

SPS Training Transformation [continued]

The LMS home page. (Click to enlarge)

LMS was designed to host and deliver digital training products, manage training information, provide training collaboration, support institutional processes and provide career planning capabilities. "DLS is pleased that SPS, with a DoD-wide audience, decided to be an early adopter of LMS. We are confidant LMS will help SPS users meet their training needs," said Mr. Glenn Maravillas, Operations and Sustainment Division, DLS.

In order to access the training, you must establish both an SPS Center of Excellence (COE) account and an Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account. Click here for instructions.

Ms. Martina Johnson, CACI's Training Manager for SPS, has been working closely with the JPMO and Edson to ensure a quality product for the users. Both Edson and Johnson agree that DLS is the perfect host for SPS' e-learning initiative. "We provide DLS with training modules and students, and they provide us with a secure online forum for the training to take place," said Edson.

An added benefit of teaming up with DLS is access to data that measures the quality of SPS' training through LMS. As LMS tracks users' progress, data is automatically translated into reports indicating where the training needs improvement, where the users are excelling and how many users are taking training or have completed courses. Users may also access their own personal account information, which helps them track their progress.

"The tracking system managed by LMS is ideal for gathering lessons learned and seeing how users are faring with the new training method," says Edson.

The v4.2.2 video-based training is similar to instructor-led training, except the videos are online and available to all SPS users. Users can choose from courses such as contracts, system administration or database maintenance. Users have the choice of taking an entire course or segments of that course. The video-based training includes quizzes and certification.

The v4.2.3 Web-based training is organized around four learning tracks:

- Functional
- Functional system administration
- Technical system administration
- Authorized callers

Each learning track has multiple modules. The prerequisite for all three learning tracks are the "Getting Acquainted" and "Basic System Function" modules.

Each module is divided into lessons, which include learning objectives, a process

explanation and a quiz. Each lesson-level quiz must be passed with a minimum of 80 percent to move to the next lesson within the module. Upon completing each lesson and passing the associated quiz, users will become certified for that module. Each certified module moves users further along the learning track.

Edson explains that the way v4.2.3 training is divided – into modules and lessons – will benefit users upon deployment. "Users can refer back to the modules and lessons to easily locate the material on which they need a refresher," she said.

The Web-based training modules, however, are not the only place users can go for questions about the SPS v4.2.3 software. The user can access the online help within the application, visit the COE training page or refer to the v4.2.3 users' guide.

Additionally, users with intermittent or non-existent Internet access can request the video-based training DVD and the Web-based training CD through their component Desk Officer.

"E-learning presents tremendous possibilities to the SPS user community. It will reach all SPS sites and users around the world stationed in even the most remote places," said Edson.

The SPS e-learning team is working hard to bring the users the best possible training experience. They intend the final product to be beneficial to the users and well worth the users' time and dedication.

Much Ado About 2005

Ask anyone at the Standard Procurement System's (SPS) Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) if they've noticed that 2005 is winding to an end, and you're likely to get a surprised reaction. "It's hard to believe," they'll say. Why the astonishment? Because, they're working hard. A lot's happened for SPS this year, and it's not slowing down anytime soon.

Time flies. When you're having *fun*? "Working hard to make SPS an enterprise business system that will empower both individual users and the entire Department of Defense (DoD) to work more efficiently is more like it," says SPS Program Manager COL Quentin Peach.

This year the JPMO has made strides deploying version 4.2 increment 2 (v4.2.2) and developing v4.2.3. All the while, they've sustained v4.2.1 for the sites still on that baseline. Here's the 2005 breakdown for each version of SPS:

V4.2.1: Among the flurry of activity of v4.2.2 upgrades and v4.2.3 development, the JPMO didn't overlook the contracting offices still using v4.2.1. To ensure the fielded software was kept up properly, they established the Sustainment Requirements Board

(SRB) with approval from Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy.

During the SRB's first full year of existence, appointed members, representing all components, met regularly to examine ways to correct deficiencies in fielded software and to address solutions to challenges brought on by technology advancements and procedural changes.

V4.2.2: V4.2.2 self-upgrades took priority for the Services and the Other Defense Agencies (ODAs) this year. The Navy and Marine Corps completed all upgrades by July, meaning that, for the first time, all Navy and Marine Corps sites are on the same version of SPS. The ODAs successfully upgraded several contracting offices right around the beginning of 2005 and have moved along steadily ever since.

The Army and Air Force dedicated much time to training and testing activities in anticipation of v4.2.2 deployments. The Army kicked off its upgrades in October and is rolling steadily along. Meanwhile, the Air Force is finishing up its final planning activities for v4.2.2 and preparing to start upgrades soon.

Much Ado About 2005 [continued]

Between Aug. 15 and Sept. 2, the Technical Division ran successful usability testing of v4.2.3, build 4, involving more than 70 defense contracting professionals. Build 5 is in the works and will be tested by the Services and Defense Agencies early in 2006. Build 5 is the final build prior to the release of the deployable version.

While the software maintenance, deployment and development work is the behind-the-scenes muscle and sweat that goes into making a standard procurement process possible for DoD, the most visible event for the Program this year was the leadership change. During a formal Change of Charter ceremony on July 26 at Ft. Belvoir, Va., long-time SPS Program Manager COL Jacob Haynes bid farewell to SPS and handed the Program's charter over to COL Quentin Peach, a gesture symbolic of the leadership change.

Finally, and not recognized nearly enough, the Program's customers, America's Warfighters, used SPS to get critical supplies and support to the men and women serving on the frontlines of the Global War on Terror and the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The JPMO strives to keep up the momentum in 2006 with the completion of v4.2.2 deployments and the launch of v4.2.3. ●

The SPS Connection
November/December 2005

DoD Establishes New Business Transformation Agency, SPS to Be a Part

News from Washington Affecting the SPS Community

The Standard Procurement System (SPS) will soon report to the newly established Business Transformation Agency (BTA) along with 17 of the Department of Defense's (DoD) largest business systems. The BTA was established Oct. 17 by the acting Deputy Secretary of Defense to centrally manage all DoD enterprise-level business systems. No standing date is in place for SPS' transition to BTA, but it's expected in the next month.

Within the BTA structure, a new position was created for a Defense Business Systems Acquisition Executive (DBSAE). Former U.S. Transportation Command Chief of Staff MG Carlos Pair was named to the DBSAE position. Pair will serve under the BTA and be responsible for overseeing all DoD enterprise business systems in accordance with DoD policy. Additionally, the Business Management Modernization Program office was folded into the BTA.

Currently, the BTA is directed jointly by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Business Transformation Paul Brinkley and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Financial Management Thomas Modly. A permanent director is to be named within the next year.

DPAP Appoints New Deputy Director to DARS

Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) announced the selection of Mr. David Capitano as the new Deputy Director for the Defense Acquisition Regulations System (DARS) on Oct. 19. Capitano formally assumed the position on Oct. 31.

Capitano is a long-time affiliate of DPAP, serving more than nine years as a senior procurement analyst for the Office of the Director, DPAP, prior to being named DARS Deputy Director. This executive position at DARS opened up last March when the former Deputy Director, Mr. Ron Poussard, departed to assume the role of Air Force Program Executive Officer for Combat and Mission Support.

The official announcement is available on the DARS home page.

November/December 2005

Desk Officers

The SPS Desk Officers are the liaisons between the Joint Program Management Office and the acquisition leaders in the Services and Defense Agencies. The Desk Officers are also your points of contact for questions and comments regarding SPS in your component.

Army Desk Officer:
Mr. George Chavis
703.460.1037

Navy/USMC Desk Officer:
Mr. Eric Ferraro
703.460.1364

Air Force Desk Officer:
Ms. Susan Haskew
703.460.1423

ODA Desk Officer:
Ms. Liz Gooding
703.460.1038

DCMA Desk Officer:
Mr. Roger Berger
703.460.1332

DLA Desk Officer:
Ms. Kate Ehrle
703.322.5990

Click here to send your SPS-related comments, questions or issues to SPS Desk Officers.

The SPS Connection welcomes all articles, photos and letters from SPS users and the community at large. Please send your input to *The SPS Connection* Editor.

The SPS Connection

November/December 2005

SPS Socket Results

November/December

Below is just one of many questions on the SPS Users Satisfaction Survey which seeks your feedback on multiple aspects of the SPS Program. Complete the survey today by going to the SPS COE.
Are you an SPS user today?

Have you plugged into the socket yet? Cast your vote below.

Below is just one of many questions on the SPS Users Satisfaction Survey which seeks your feedback on multiple aspects of the SPS Program. Complete the survey today by going to the SPS COE.
Are you an SPS user today?

○ Version 4.1.e
○ Version 4.2.1
○ Version 4.2.2
○ No

Submit

Version 4.1.e
5%

Version 4.2.1
39%

Version 4.2.2
32%

No
24%

38 respondents